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S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0571

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR: INFORMAL SESSION WITH EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES OF

NOVEMBER 16, 1976

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN THE NOV 16 INFORMAL SESSION OF THE VIENNA TALKS, THE ALLIES WERE REPRESENTED BY THE FRG REP, NETHERLANDS REP AND US REP, AND THE EAST BY SOVIET REPS TARASOV AND SHUSTOV, CZECHOSLOVAK REP MEISNER, AND POLISH REP DABROWA. EASTERN REPS EMPHASIZED THREE MAIN THEMES: THE NEED TO INCLUDE AIR FORCES IN REDUCTIONS; EASTERN OPPOSITION TO COLLECTIVE CEILINGS; AND THE DESIRABILITY OF A NO-INCREASE COMMITMENT ON MILITARY MANPOWER FOR THE DURATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. SOVIET REP TARASOV DEVOTED HIS ENTIRE STATEMENT TO THE EASTERN PROPOSAL ON NO-INCREASE COMMITMENT, AND ENGAGED IN AN HOUR-LONG DEBATE ON THIS TOPIC.

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2. FRG REP OPENED THE SESSION. HE SAID THAT TARASOV'S STATEMENT IN THE NOV 9 SESSION THAT PARTICIPANTS HAD FROM THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS APPARENTLY STARTED FROM THE PREMISE THAT ANY REDUCTION WAS INSEPARABLY LINKED TO LIMITATIONS AT THE RESULTING RESIDUAL LEVELS HAD HAD THE EFFECT OF CONFIRMING THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH WOULD CONTRACTUALIZE THE EAST'S NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY IN MOST MAJOR TYPES OF ARMAMENTS AS WELL AS IN MILITARY MANPOWER. IN THE WESTERN VIEW, THE ONLY FEASIBLE WAY OF DEALING WITH A SITUATION CHARACTERIZED BY THE EXISTENCE OF IMPORTANT EASTERN NUMERICAL SUPERIORITIES, BY THE REFUSAL OF THE WEST TO CONTRACTUALIZE THESE SUPERIORITIES, AND BY THE APPARENT DESIRE OF BOTH SIDES TO MOVE AHEAD TO AN AGREEMENT, WAS THROUGH A MIXED-PACKAGE APPROACH SUCH AS THE WEST HAD PROPOSED.

3. POLISH REP PRESENTED EASTERN CASE FOR REDUCTION OF AIR FORCES. HE CRITICIZED WESTERN FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES. HE REJECTED ACROSS-THE-BOARD PARITY OF ALL TYPES OF FORCES IN THE AREA AS UNWORKABLE AND ARGUED THAT THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES SHOULD BE PRESERVED THROUGH EQUAL PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS. HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF AIR FORCES AND SAID THEIR OMISSION FROM REDUCTIONS WOULD ONLY INCREASE THEIR IMPORTANCE AND DESTABILIZE THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

4. NETHERLANDS REP GAVE REASONS WHY THE WEST CONSIDERED FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES JUSTIFIABLE AND NECESSARY. HE CRITICIZED EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSAL, STATING THAT IT NEITHER MET MAIN ASPECTS OF THE WESTERN POSITION ON PHASING NOR CHANGED IN ANY SUBSTANTIAL RESPECT THE OUTCOME WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORIGINAL EASTERN DRAFT AGREEMENT. THEREFORE, THE EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSAL COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AS A SERIOUS RESPONSE TO THE WESTERN DEC 16, 1975 PROPOSALS.

5. CZECHOSLOVAK REP CONTINUED EASTERN CRITICISM OF THE WESTERN FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES. HE SAID THAT WESTERN ARGUMENTATION ON THIS POINT WAS BASED ON THE IMPLICATION THAT BECAUSE THE EAST HAD MORE GROUND FORCES IN THE AREA, IT WOULD MISUSE THIS SUPERIORITY. BUT PARTICIPANTS HAD ALREADY AGREED EARLIER IN THE TALKS TO STICK TO THE FACTS OF THE ACTUAL SITUATION AND NOT TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE INTENTIONS OF EITHER SIDE. IF INTENTIONS

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WERE TO BE DISCUSSED, THE EAST WOULD HAVE MUCH TO SAY ABOUT POSSIBLE WESTERN INTENTIONS. CZECHOSLOVAK REP ATTACKED THE WESTERN COLLECTIVE CEILING CONCEPT AS A CLOAK FOR MODERNIZATION AND FOR FORCE INCREASES BY SOME WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS INSTEAD OF REDUCTIONS.

6. US REP STRESSED COMPROMISE NATURE OF WESTERN DEC 16 PROPOSALS. HE SAID THE ADDITIONAL REDUCTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

THE WEST OFFERED UNDER ITS DEC 16 PROPOSALS REPRESENTED A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE OUTCOME RESULTING FROM AN AGREEMENT, TOOK INTO REASONABLE ACCOUNT THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE EAST ON THE REDUCTION OF AIR AND NUCLEAR ELEMENTS, AND PROVIDED A WAY OF RECONCILING THE EASTERN POSITION THAT THE WEST SHOULD REDUCE ALL TYPES OF MAJOR ARMAMENTS WITH THE WESTERN POSITION THAT THE WEST SHOULD REDUCE ONLY GROUND FORCE MANPOWER. THE MIXED-PACKAGE CONCEPT WAS A PRACTICAL METHOD OF DEALING WITH THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE EASTERN DESIRE TO CONTRACTUALIZE ITS SUPERIORITIES IN THE AREA, THE WESTERN REFUSAL TO DO THIS, AND, AT THE SAME TIME, WITH THE NEED TO MOVE TOWARDS AGREEMENT ON SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTIONS.

7. SOVIET REP TARASOV APPEALED FOR RENEWED WESTERN ATTENTION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A JOINT STATEMENT ON NON-INCREASE OF THE MANPOWER OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR THE DURATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. TARASOV SAID INTEREST IN THIS POSSIBILITY WAS NOT CONFINED TO THE EAST, BUT WAS SHARED IN THE WEST. HE CITED RECENT PROPOSAL BY WILLY BRANDT IN RECENT MEETING OF EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTIES IN AMSTERDAM. TARASOV CLAIMED JOINT STATEMENT ON NO-INCREASE WOULD BE A PRACTICAL BAR TO THE ARMS RACE IN CENTRAL EUROPE, MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL DETENTE, PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE FOR SIMILAR MEASURES BY NON-PARTIPANTS IN THE VIENNA TALKS, CONTRIBUTE GENERALLY TO AN ATMOSPHERE OF EAST-WEST CONFIDENCE, AND FAVORABLY AFFECT THE COURSE OF THE VIENNA TALKS.

8. WESTERN REPS SAID THAT A NO-INCREASE COMMITMENT SHOULD BE PART OF A REDUCTION AGREEMENT. NEGOTIATION ON A NO-INCREASE AGREEMENT AS A SEPARATE ISSUE COULD DISTRACT FROM THE MAIN BUSINESS OF NEGOTIATING REDUCTIONS. A NO-INCREASE COMMITMENT WHETHER TEMPORARY OR NOT WOULD CONTRACTUALIZE THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIP OF MILITARY MANPOWER ON BOTH SIDES, LEAD TO THE

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ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CEILINGS, AND REQUIRE THAT BOTH SIDES AGREE ON THE NUMERICAL FORCE LEVELS ON EACH SIDE, A SUBJECT ON WHICH THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT.

9. TARASOV ARGUED IN RESPONSE THAT A NO-INCREASE STATEMENT WOULD PROMOTE AGREEMENT ON REDUCTIONS. HE SAID THAT A JOINT STATEMENT WOULD MERELY BE A COLLECTION OF UNILATERAL NATIONAL PLEDGES AND WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT CONTAIN SPECIFIC FIGURES ON THE FORCES OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS AND WOULD THUS NOT HAVE THE EFFECT OF CONTRACTUALIZING THE EAST-WEST MANPOWER RELATIONSHIP NOR OF IMPOSING NATIONAL CEILINGS. WESTERN REPS SAID THAT AN OBLIGATION, NO MATTER HOW INFORMAL, REMAINED AN OBLIGATION, AND POINTED OUT THAT THIS VERSION OF THE EASTERN PROPOSAL COULD IN ADDITION BECAUSE OF ITS LACK OF NUMBERS AND PRECISION LEAD TO MUTUAL SUSPICIONS AND ACCUSATIONS WHICH WOULD

UNDERMINE THE VIENNA TALKS RATHER THAN CONTRIBUTE TO THEM.

END SUMMARY.

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